

2021

Board of Health ANNUAL REPORT moving forward

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## About us

**OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES** 

## We are Public Health

Working to create healthier communities

Those who are unfamiliar with Public Health often wonder, "What does our health department do and who do they serve?" The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) has been in existence since 1966, and while there have been many changes in public health since then, MMDHDs goal remains the same - striving to create a healthier community for our residents.

The role of MMDHD is in the area of preventative services. All of our programs include a health education component, which makes us more effective in the field of preventative services (promoting good sanitation, personal health practices, and community screening and education).

## **Essential Public Health Services**

MMDHD works to ensure that residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm counties are provided with these mandated Essential Public Health Services:

- Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.
- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
- Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
- Connect people to needed personal health services
- Assure a competent public and personal health care workforce.
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services.
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

MMDHD operates in a primarily rural community, serving residents in Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm counties. There are 52 townships, approximately 1,872 square miles and a combined population of over 181,200 year-round residents within the Health Department's jurisdiction.

We serve the community by offering preventative care, education, research and data, and setting policy in a collaborative manner with our many community partners. Our collaborative efforts include working with our partners to implement Community Health Improvement Plans. These plans address the health priorities of each community we serve and ensures our community is prepared in case of an emergency (outbreak or natural disaster).

## Our I CARE values

Our values guide our way

#### NNOVATION

We empower each other (staff) to seek out new ideas (methods) in order to improve health in our communities. We apply the principles of continuous quality improvement to achieve efficiency and quality customer service.

#### COLLABORATION.

We value the diversity and unique contributions of our employees and partners. We develop positive relationships, foster innovative solutions, and strengthen our capacity to accomplish our mission.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

We operate with open communication, transparency, timeliness, and integrity. We are effective and efficient managers of the public trust and public funds, and hold ourselves and others to high standards.

#### RESPECT

We uphold a standard of conduct that recognizes and values the contributions of all. We create an environment which enhances positive relationships between coworkers and clients.

## **EQUITY**

We value equity as an essential foundation for healthier communities. We foster an environment in which listening to and understanding our differences is encouraged and confidences are protected.

MISSION	<b>VISION</b>
Our mission shapes our today.	Our vision tells our tomorrow
We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.	Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes

## Health Officer's Report

## 2021: A YEAR OF COLLABORATION





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**Branch office locations** 

1307 E. Townsend Road • St. Johns 48879

615 N. State Street • Stanton 48888

151 Commerce Drive • Ithaca 48847

On behalf of the Mid-Michigan District Health Department, I am pleased to present the 2021 Board of Health Annual Report and Financial Review. In this report you will find a summary of the significant amount of work that our public health staff does to enhance healthy lifestyles, prevent diseases, and provide vital community services to residents.

It seems that the entire year was a "COVID year" and everything we did was driven by the pandemic. We continued to provide all public health essential programs to the community and communications with existing partners, such as hospitals, medical providers and school districts continued. We sought to collaborate with new partners like EMS, the National Guard, and community halls. The County Emergency Managers also provided support in numerous ways.

Staff operated COVID clinics both at our offices and in the community for a period of five months. Operating mass vaccination clinics is an undertaking that requires both clinical and nonclinical staff to be available to fill roles that are necessary to ensure efficient running of operations. Throughout this time, staff continued to offer other services in different contracted programs, either in person by appointment, telehealth service, or remote service. The resilience of our staff was tremendous. In addition to working long hours, they responded to community needs, even when the request fell outside the scope of what a health department typical can respond to. We are grateful to community partners that stood up clinics to ensure school personnel got vaccinated early in the year in time for school to begin, and the National Guard that provided vaccine to homebound and nursing home residents. These

collaborations, along with others, reduced the challenges typically associated with vaccine accessibility in rural communities.

The opportunity to interact with and observe the roles of other community organizations has been an impactful and positive consequence of the pandemic. We are committed to continuing to work together towards efficient goals and protecting the health of our community.

Environmental hazards, both historical and emerging issues, continue to be monitored in the district. In Gratiot County the effect of environmental toxins associated with the St. Louis Velsicol site dates back to 1973. Our office continues to monitor drinking water wells close to the superfund site for contaminants. Staff also are active members of the PBB Leadership Team and continue to work on new initiatives to educate people about PBB and its impact on the health of the community. This is a deep and meaningful collaboration between the community, Health Department and Emory University. In Clinton and Montcalm counties, the impact of PFAS on drinking water wells continues to be investigated. Our Environmental Health Division staff work on a public health action plan that is implemented when drinking water wells are located in areas of potential PFAS exposure. Harmful algal blooms were reported on two area lakes leading to the issuance of Public Health Advisories.

Having a public health work force that can respond to emerging issues in the community is critical. Our office has always been at the forefront of educating and communicating accurate and timely messaging on all public health matters to the community.

My own transition over the last six months from working predominantly in Environmental Health to being the Health Officer has been a tremendous experience. I am grateful for the support of the Board of Health, Commissioners, community partners, and especially my staff. We will continue to persevere together, and I believe that through sound public health practices, we will overcome this virus.

Liz Braddock MS, RS

M6 JBracelock

Health Officer



## Medical Director's Report

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## SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAM LAUNCHED





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In October 2021, we were notified by the disease intervention specialists (DIS) covering our area of a network of new HIV diagnoses associated with injection drug use (IDU) with connections to Montcalm County. This was very concerning news as sharing needles, syringes, or other drug injection equipment is common among people who inject drugs (PWID) and an outbreak of HIV could occur if someone with HIV were part of a sharing group. With the rapid support and assistance of many partners, in particular Kate Behrenwald, PA, at Spectrum Health, Steve Alsum at The Red Project, and Mike Helmer at Randy's House, increased community HIV testing and syringe service programing was made available in this community within three months.

Syringe service programs, which at a minimum provide access to and disposal of sterile syringes and injection equipment, are just one component of harm reduction. Harm reduction is a collection of strategies aimed to meet people who use drugs "where they are at" in their lives to keep them as safe and as healthy as possible. These strategies can include safer use, managed use, or abstinence. Safer drug use includes many things, such as access to safe supplies and sterile syringes, education on how to safely prepare and inject drugs to reduce risks for injury, and infection as well as how to identify and manage injuries and infections. It also includes education and provisions for safe disposal of used syringes and equipment to prevent injuries to others.

Overdose prevention is a part of safer drug use, and this includes education on not using alone, providing naloxone and instructing on its use, avoiding situations that are a risk for overdose, and testing drugs for fentanyl. Safer drug use also encompasses other aspects of life, such

as necessities for safer sex, birth control, pregnancy care, health care, mental health care, connections to employment services, education, and recovery programs, whenever the time is right.

The National Harm Reduction Coalition feels there are several principles central to harm reduction practice. These include:

- The need to understand drug use as a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviors from severe use to total abstinence.
- Some ways of using drugs are clearly safer than others.
- The non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people who use drugs and the communities in which they live, in order to assist them in reducing attendant harm, is important.
- Not attempting to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger that can be associated with illicit drug use.

It is our hope that our community embraces these principles as well.

Jennifer Morse, MD, MPH, FAAFP Medical Director





## Our Leadership

#### **BOARD OF HEALTH**

The Board of Health governs the agency's programming, finances and personnel and ensures that residents receive long-term continuing health protection. The Board is comprised of two county commissioners, appointed by our three counties.



### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Our Administrative Staff oversees the daily operations of the department.

Liz Braddock, MS, RS, Health Officer

Jennifer Morse, MD, MPH, FAAFP, Medical Director

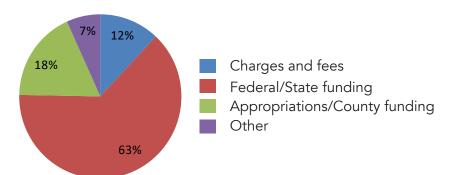
Melissa Selby, Administrative Service Division Director

Sarah Doak, Community Health and Education Division Director

Lonnie Smith, Environmental Health Division Director

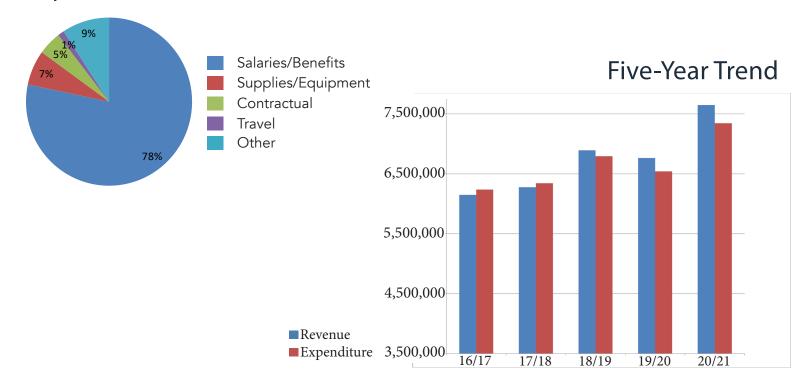


### Revenues



These two pie charts show MMDHDs revenues and expenditures. Most of our funding comes from the State of Michigan, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Agriculture. Appropriations from our three counties (Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm) were 18% of our funding. We earned the rest by billing insurance companies, charging fees, and winning grants.

## **Expenditures**



## **Environmental Health Division**

In 2021, MMDHD received grant funding through Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to conduct beach water quality monitoring within our three counties. Water sampling was conducted weekly from Memorial Day to Labor Day, testing for E. coli at Clinton County's Lake Ovid, Motz Park Lake, and Park Lake; Gratiot County's Hubscher Park Lake and Reed Park Lake; and Montcalm County's Crystal Lake.



If sample results exceeded action levels, the beach was posted with a swimming and ingesting advisory, due to the levels of E. coli present. Additional sampling then occured to monitor the E. coli and, at times, to try to determine the source. All sample results were posted on EGLE's BeachGuard website.

This grant funding will also include sampling at the same waterbodies in 2022 to help ensure that our community has safe and healthy water for recreation.

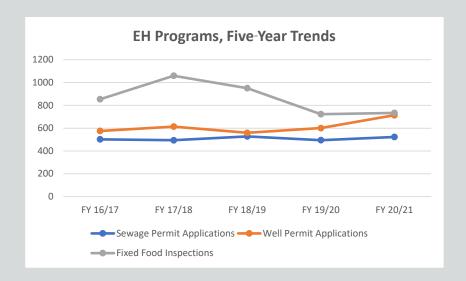
This past year has been a series of challenges for this agency due to the pandemic. One of the more eye-opening issues within the Environmental Health Division was the increase of failed onsite septic systems in our three counties. A 26% increase of replacement onsite septic system permit applications were submitted, compared to the same time period the previous two years when no pandemic was occurring.

This can be related mainly to hydraulic overload, which was highly noted by our Environmental Health Specialists during failed system evaluations. Starting in August 2020, our agency was experiencing the effects of people working from home and/or being unemployed due to the pandemic. This caused onsite septic systems to receive additional flow amounts above normal. Pre-pandemic employees were spending the majority of their day at their place of employment and onsite septic systems would be in a state of rest. With people being home all day, the onsite septic systems received more than the normal amount of wastewater thus causing premature failure of these systems. Of course, this was not the sole reason for failure, but the additional daily flows certainly sped up the process.

The question moving forward will be how a local health department can properly design onsite septic systems in the future to help account for the additional water usage of a residential setting that includes the occupants working from that location. Working from home always has had that element to a certain percent, but now with enhanced technology and being put in a position with the pandemic, more people will have that opportunity going forward.

Lonnie Smith, RS Environmental Health Division Director

The Environmental Health Division's primary objective is ensuring a safe and healthy environment for the residents and visitors of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm counties.





In 2021, the Environmental Health Division provided services to 3,420 unduplicated clients.

		<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Gratiot</u>	<u>Montcalm</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
This program assures the public that meals consumed outside of the home are safe.	FOOD PROGRAM Advanced food training classes Food service inspections (fixed) Food service inspections (temp) TOTAL	17 277 30 <b>324</b>	18 208 10 236	16 249 44 309	51 734 84 <b>869</b>
This program helps prevent the spread of disease by overseeing sewage disposal.	WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT On-site sewage disposal permits Site evaluations TOTAL	148 166 314	77 93 <b>170</b>	298 377 <b>675</b>	523 636 <b>1,159</b>
This program assures a safe environment where we live and play.	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY Campground inspections DHS inspections Nuisance complaint investigations Public swimming pool inspections Body art inspections Medical waste inspections TOTAL	5 42 100 31 4 0	5 23 60 4 5 0	31 51 192 14 9 0 297	41 116 352 49 18 0 <b>576</b>
This program protects our lakes, streams and the water we drink.	SURFACE/GROUNDWATER CONTENTS Water well permits Water well monitoring Septage hauler truck inspections Septage site inspections Loan evaluations TOTAL		115 13 14 0 3 145	456 12 18 8 17 511	714 25 40 9 28 <b>816</b>

## Community Health and Education Division

Fluidity: the quality of being graceful or flowing. The last two years have been the epitome of being fluid here at MMDHD. Our lives, both personally and professionally, were forever changed in March of 2020. The COVID-19 crisis affected every aspect of our services, but we choose to see the good that has emerged. We have been able to remain fluid with our services offered, where or how they are offered, and to what extent they are offered.



Clinical services are more challenging to provide in a remote, or telehealth setting, but in a matter of a few days, we were prepared to offer the breadth of our services in new ways. Most of our WIC services are still provided remotely over the phone or by video. So many of our clients have stated they prefer this new delivery method because they don't have to pack up and load their children into the vehicle to attend their appointments. They like being able to complete the visit from the comfort of their own home.

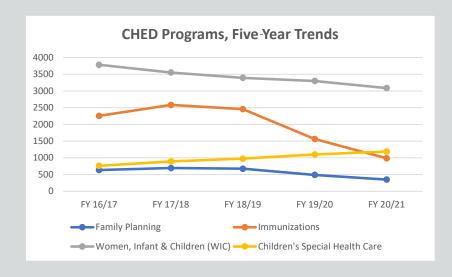
Our women's health services were paused for a few months, but as

soon as the State reopened, we began scheduling clients in longer appointment slots and holding clinics more often to meet their needs. The same is true with our immunization program. We began scheduling longer appointments and added more clinic days to ensure we were keeping our community protected against vaccine preventable diseases. We had many children who needed to 'catch up' on immunizations as well as maintain their routine vaccine schedule. Screenings for hearing and vision continued, oral health screenings and fluoride varnish were applied, lead case management and children's special health care services were kept on track.

We were, and still are, committed to maintaining and improving the health of our community by continuing to provide all our services. Add in the extra workload of the COVID-19 case investigations, contact tracing, helping our community navigate the ever-changing rules and guidelines, and vaccinating against COVID-19, I think we can say with certainty that we have proven our fluidity.

Sarah Doak, BS, RN Community Health and Education Division Director

The Community Health and Education Division embraces its role as the provider of and advocate for public health in our three counties.





In 2021, the Community Health and Education Division provided services to 76,824 unduplicated clients.

		<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Gratiot</u>	<u>Montcalm</u>	TOTAL	
This program gives financial, social, medical	MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH					
and nutritional support	Hearing screenings	704	917	917	2,538	
to qualified families. It	Vision screenings	754	954	630	2,338	
reduces infant mortality,	Children's Special Health Care Services	596	492	910	1,998_	
ensures healthy births	Family planning	196	229	219	644	
and maintains the health	Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	2,526	3,845	5,979	12,350	
of mothers and babies.	TOTAL	4,776	6,437	8,655	19,868	
This program targets	CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL					
certain chronic diseases	Breast and cervical cancer control	6	6	0	12	
and focuses on early detection and referral.	Lead screening	0	0	0	0	
	TOTAL	6	6	0	12	
This program offers	COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL					
testing, education, prevention and treatment to control communicable diseases.	Communicable disease control	11,131	6,650	27,285	45,066	
	HIV counseling and testing	17	17	54	88	
	Immunizations	3,783	3,691	4,131	11,605	
	Sexually transmitted disease control	41	45	63	149	
	TOTAL	14,972	10,403	31,533	56,908	
This program provides	ORAL HEALTH					
fluoride varnish to children whose families are uninsured.	Fluoride varnish applications	8	9	19	36	
	TOTAL	8	9	19	36	

## Administrative Services Division

The Administrative Services Division is responsible for providing comprehensive operational support to ensure the delivery of services to our communities.

In order to respond to the pandemic, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department as a whole needed to continually adapt to meet the challenges and the needs of our communities. The Administrative Services Division assisted with this process in numerous ways and also needed to learn how to adapt ourselves. This included offering solutions on how we could continue to provide services and assisting in the pandemic response in whatever ways we could.

The reliance on technology became even more prominent as staff needed the ability to continue to provide services while working remotely. This included obtaining the necessary equipment, finding solutions to issues that arose, using our cloud-based platforms, and being readily available to offer whatever assistance was needed. As other organizations found, acquiring technology equipment and other items during the pandemic was difficult for us at times due to supply chain issues. This was one of many hurdles we needed to overcome.

There was a need to quickly set up and staff a COVID-19 call center in order to be able to handle the overwhelming number of calls that were coming in from the public. We also needed to continually educate our call center staff as new pandemic information was received from local, State, and Federal partners.

We regularly updated our website in an effort to provide our communities with the most up-to-date information. We also shared information frequently by posting on social media, and issuing press releases and our electronic newsletter.

Additionally, there was a need to increase our workforce to respond to the pandemic. Hiring staff during the pandemic was challenging at times, but we were fortunate that we were able to fill all of the essential positions.

Melissa Selby, BAS Administrative Services Division Director



# Substance Use Disorder Prevention Services

The Substance Use Disorder (SUD) program, serving Montcalm County, offers high school leadership initiatives, classroom education, an education program for youth found vaping in the schools, informational programs, community coalition support services, and environmental change initiatives.



#### HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Mid-Michigan District Health Department staff facilitate leadership learning opportunities for high school students in participating school districts. These students also have the opportunity to participate in a county-wide youth leadership group.

#### **CLASSROOM EDUCATION**

We offer Project Success to 7th and 9th grade classrooms. Schools have been served in-person or virtually, depending on their preference.

#### **VAPING EDUCATION**

Due to the increase in vape use among school-age youth, our staff developed and offer an educational program on vaping and vaping-related health consequences. The program can be requested by an area school for students caught vaping, in lieu of negative consequences, such as suspension.

#### **INFORMATION PROGRAMS**

Substance Use Disorder staff are available to present to organizations and groups on a variety of prevention topics.

#### **COMMUNITY COALITION SUPPORT**

Mid-Michigan District Health Department SUD staff work with local volunteers to create, organize and operate local coalitions. Staff play supportive roles by assisting with creating by-laws, planning, evaluation, grant writing, and other activities as needed for the coalitions to realize successful outcomes.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

Staff engage in activities geared toward changing community norms, organizational policies, etc., for the purpose of reinforcing healthy lifestyles.



On March 20, 2020, Health Officer Marcus Cheatham, who has since retired, notified staff via email that the entire agency would be transitioning to remote work for the foreseeable future due to the looming COVID-19 pandemic. Staff knew this day was coming, but it still came as a bit of a shock. Was this really happening?

Mid-Michigan District Health Department, along with local public health departments across the country, had been planning for a pandemic as part of its emergency preparedness efforts for many years. The emergency preparedness mantra had always been it wasn't a matter of "if" a pandemic would occur but "when" a pandemic would occur. As unbelievable as it seemed, a pandemic wasn't only knocking on our doorsteps, it was in fact here.

Staff packed up their personal belongings, laptops, office supplies, and other items needed to work effectively from home. At the time it was unfathomable that staff would be working from home for more than a few weeks, but weeks quickly turned into months, fourteen months to be exact.

Staff needed to adjust to a very different work day from what they were used to. They were no longer able to walk down the hall and collaborate with co-workers face-to-face; instead, staff embraced new Microsoft Teams technology which allowed them to connect with each other via video chat. Out-of-the-box thinking was a must as "different" became the new normal.

We continued to provide services during the pandemic, but how we went about it changed. Some of those ways included:

- Food inspections were conducted to align with new restaurant business practices with an emphasis on employee health and safe delivery and storage of take-out or to-go menus.
- Water supply surveys included plans for flushing water that had been stagnant while schools or businesses were closed for extended periods of time.
- Nurses provided immunizations in our parking lots for clients who preferred to remain in their cars versus coming into our buildings.
- Just-in-time training was provided to staff transitioning to temporary pandemic roles, like data loggers, vaccine transportation, and answering the COVID-19 phone hotline, just to name a few.



## MMDHDs response to COVID-19

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Social media posts
- Website updates/COVID-19 data dashboard
- Began issuing E-Newsletter
- Launched COVID-19 information phone hotline
- Weekly Medical Director calls with schools
- Health Officer videos posted to social media and website

#### **COLLABORATION**

- Partnered with Emergency Operations Centers to disseminate information and organize response initiatives
- Partnered with Sparrow Mobile Unit to serve residents along the Clinton County border
- Arranged temporary housing and meals for residents unable to quarantine and isolate at home
- Partnered with Central Michigan University Mobile Health to serve residents along the M46 corridor
- Partnered with Ionia County to hold vaccine clinic for agriculture workers with bilingual volunteers
- Community Health Emergency Coordination Center participation
- Partnered with National Guard to offer testing and vaccination clinics
- Worked with community partners to vaccinate homebound residents
- Coordinated placing Health Resource Advocates in schools
- Distributed thousands of doses of COVID-19 vaccine to approved providers
- Distributed PPE to community partners and the public
- Ensured School Nutrition Programs could continue to operate when school buildings were closed
- Provided health and safety guidance to businesses, places of worship, and schools affected by State Executive Orders

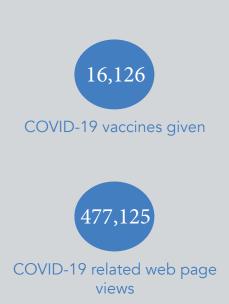
#### INTERNAL INITIATIVES

- Coordinated COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites
- Conducted virtual visits
- Hired additional staff
- Restructured staff/clinic schedules to keep everyone physically distancied
- Implemented new technology to improve efficiency
- Implemented new phone platform and Microsoft Teams to make communication easier
- All staff were issued agency cell phones
- Health Officer held virtual monthly meetings with all staff

## COVID-19 in numbers

## for the year 2021









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## Notes of appreciation

Mid-Michigan District Health Department received many thank you notes during the course of the pandemic. Here are just a few examples:

My son with autism received both of his vaccines at the fairgrounds in St. Johns in April. I would like to commend your staff for their kindness and respect toward him. On both dates staff addressed us professionally, asked if we needed additional accommodations, and administered the vaccines very efficiently. I am truly grateful to MMDHD and our amazing public health leaders!

My family appreciates the Health Department!

Within a few days of receiving the email that I was on the waiting list, I was able to get scheduled and received my first vaccine. It was easy in and out in half an hour or so. Everyone at the Health Department was so friendly and professional, even though they were very busy.

Thank you to all the workers at the Townsend Road office for vaccinating us.

They were all so friendly!

My wife and I were vaccinated at your Ithaca office. We were impressed with the professionalism and friendliness of your staff.

Keep up the good work!

Thank you for taking care of us!

Thanks from the bottom of our hearts!

So appreciative for all the Health Department is doing!

Thank you for all you're doing!

Thank you for the excellent service!

My husband and I received our COVID vaccinations at your clinic. The experience vaccinations at your clinic. The experience was absolutely outstanding, from start was absolutely outstanding, from start to finish. Everything was well-organized, and everyone was professional and caring.

Your team was great!!
We appreciated the extra
measures taken to ensure
a safe and sanitized
environment during our
visit.

Your staff díd a great job! Dear friends at the Mid-Michigan District Health Department in Stanton, Thank you for the kind way you handled a very sticky situation with the elderly and road closures during the COVID vaccination clinic!

very efficient, job well-done!

Thank you for your service!

Commendable job! We received our COVID vaccinations today in Stanton and were very impressed with how smoothly everything went. It was very organized and everyone was so nice!

Great job and thanks to all involved!

A paramedic came to my home and gave me the COVID vaccine. Thank you for helping to arrange for me to get the vaccine in my home!

My wife and I appreciate the efforts of the Health Department during the pandemic.

Thanks for all you do!

Thanks to everyone at the Health Department for your efforts.

You all do a wonderful job!

Thank you for your vital service to our community!

Thanks for everything!



**CLINTON • GRATIOT • MONTCALM** 







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